

Loyal Heights Lighting Renovation Meeting Summary 12-14-05

Less than 10 community members attended a community meeting to review and comment on lighting improvements at Loyal Heights Playfield. Invitations to the community meeting were mailed to over 5000 nearby residents and other interested parties.

Parks Department staff Cathy Tuttle, Planner, Ted Holden, Senior Landscape Architect, Dennis Cook, Senior Recreation Coordinator, and consultant Don McLean, Principal of DMD & Associates, an engineering firm specializing sports lighting and obtrusive lighting issues attended the meeting and were available to listen to ideas and answer community comments.

Project budget, scope, and schedule

Planner Cathy Tuttle described the project's budget, schedule, and scope. The budget for upgraded field lighting is about \$450,000. This money was reprioritized from other athletic fields that also need lighting improvements so that lighting could be added as requested by the Loyal Heights community. The goal is to provide upgraded lighting by the fall of 2006. The higher light poles require a City Council Hearing. The timing of this Hearing and its outcome will determine the final schedule of new lighting installation.

This project will replace the existing field lighting for Loyal Heights Playfield's soccer and softball fields to provide more uniform surface illumination with minimum energy consumption and add lighting for the existing baseball field, while restricting spill and glare lighting from falling on nearby residences, per City code and Department standards.

The Pro Parks Levy provides \$2.3 million for the Loyal Heights Playfield Improvement project. This project will upgrade athletic field lighting and rebuild and resurface the existing two ballfields and football/soccer field with synthetic turf for year-round, all-weather use, improved quality of play that requires minimal annual field maintenance. Construction of the project will be completed in 2006.

Description of lighting system

Lighting engineer Don McLean described the upgraded Loyal Heights lights. Because the new fixtures will replace fixtures more than 30 years old, glare will be significantly reduced. Don showed preliminary light meter readings from sidewalks around the field and said new lighting would easily meet the City's required 1 footcandle or less of light spill.

The old wooden light poles will be replaced by steel poles. Steel poles do not bend and warp out of alignment as the old poles did, causing uneven light spillage. Further improvements in light shielding will eliminate most spill and sky glow from this athletic field lighting system. Don explained that taller poles typically reduce the impacts off site because the fixtures can be aimed more accurately downward on the field. Don also said a synthetic field was less reflective and caused less sky glow and spill light effects.

The scope of this project is to provide new field lighting that:

1. Eliminates objectionable spill and glare lighting on surrounding residences,
2. Improves lighting uniformity for player safety,
3. Improves lighting efficiency and power conservation,
4. Improves program control for selective field lighting, and
5. Reduces light levels to Park standard for Class IV Recreational fields.

Community questions and comments

Where are the lights controlled? Lights are controlled by wireless remote and will have a fixed shut off time.

Where are the security or safety lights? Can Parks guarantee field lights will be shut off after 10 p.m.? Security lights will be mounted on the metal light poles and turned on when the field lights are shut off at 10 p.m. so that players can safely exit the field. This field will not keep athletic field lights on after 10 p.m.

Could a light be focused on the playground because many children play there while their parents are playing sports? This request is beyond the scope of this athletic field lighting project, however, Parks staff will consider this possibility with the lighting designer and see if budget allows some playground lighting to be installed.

How was DMD selected as the lighting consultant? Is this the first field DMD has worked on?

Consultants from the City of Seattle's consultant roster for electrical engineering were contacted by Parks and asked to submit proposals for Loyal Heights Lighting Improvements. DMD was selected for its team of skillful sports field lighting experts. Don McLean is the lead sports lighting and electrical designer for DMD & Associates. He has over 25 years experience in sports lighting design and has personally participated in over 150 sports lighting projects throughout the region and North America. Don is supported by a team of engineering specialists at DMD.

How are lights maintained and adjusted after they are installed? Lights are checked and realigned if necessary after the fixtures are installed. The fixtures will be maintained regularly by Parks electricians and lighting manufacturers.

Will Parks provide blinds for our windows? Parks does not intend to buy blinds for residences as part of this project.

Why does Parks want to light both Field #1 and Field #2 as well as the soccer/football field? Only Field #2 and the soccer/football field are lit now. Parks wants to make the playfield flexible for all activities. Field #1 is used by Pony League baseball, Field #2 is used by Little League and softball. The lighting system will be designed so that only one baseball or softball field can be lit at any one time.

What local projects have similar lights? Lower Woodland field #1 has similar lights. It is not in operation right now. You can contact Dennis Cook at 684-7094 to ask to have the lights turned on for your review. Miller Playfield at 20th and E. John in Capitol Hill and Genessee Playfield at 4316 S Genessee St also have newer versions of field lights.

Does this project benefit athletics more than the neighborhood? Parks staff believe the upgrading the field and field lights is a real win-win: the improved field lights benefit both the local sports teams and the local neighborhood.

A representative from the Seattle Neighborhood Council noted that the Council opposes the Loyal Heights Improvement project and that the lighting consultant doesn't understand Seattle neighborhoods. **So noted.**

Can Parks provide electrical outlets in the field to plug in pitching machines? Parks will make sure some poles have locked electrical outlets that the community will be able to open when needed.

A second Open House to discuss a lighting renovation project at Loyal Heights Playfield, will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 11, from 7 – 8:30 p.m. at the Loyal Heights Community Center, at 2101 NW 77th St.

For more information, or if you require special accommodation for the next meeting, please call Parks Project Planner Cathy Tuttle at 206-684-1336 or e-mail at cathy.tuttle@seattle.gov.